

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Of claims 2-12 that were pending in the application, claims 8-12 were rejected in the Office Action. The allowance of claims 2-7 is noted with appreciation. By way of this amendment, Applicant has amended claims 8 and 11. Accordingly, claims 2-12 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

With respect to the amendments made herein to claims 8 and 11, Applicant notes that passenger-side airbags are directed to the torso of a passenger, as shown in Figures 5A-5B of JP 10-315892, which was incorporated by reference.

1. Rejection of Claim 11

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,358,273 (“Onishi”). For at least the following reasons, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As amended, claim 11 recites a passenger-side air bag that includes, amongst other things (emphasis added):

- a front section including a pair of front panels forming an exterior surface,
wherein both front panels are positioned to face a torso of a passenger when the air bag deploys;
- wherein one of the pair of front panels includes a rearward extending section located inside the air bag and connecting the front section to a rear section;
- wherein the rear section includes a rear panel and a mid panel, the mid panel being connected to the rearward extending section and the rear panel;
- wherein a seam joining the pair of front panels is located away from the exterior surface so that the seam cannot contact the passenger when the air bag deploys;
- wherein the rearward extending section and the mid panel divide the air bag into upper and lower chambers; and
- wherein the rearward extending section includes at least one opening formed therein for allowing gas to pass between the chambers.

As explained further below, Onishi fails to teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed passenger-side air bag.

In maintaining the rejection in the Advisory Action, the Examiner stated that Onishi discloses “a front section, including a pair of front panels (#2 and the front portion of #1) that form an exterior surface positioned to face the passenger when the air bag deploys (best seen in figure 14).” Assuming, *arguendo*, that the Examiner’s position that the panels (#2 and the front portion of #1) face a passenger M when deployed is correct, the rejection still should be

withdrawn because only one of the panels (*i.e.*, panel #2) faces “a torso of a passenger,” as now recited in claim 11. The other panel (*i.e.*, the front portion of #1) faces the legs and groin of the passenger when deployed, as shown in Onishi Figure 14. As a result, if anything, panel 1 is analogous to the “rear section” recited in claim 11. Thus, for at least these reasons Onishi clearly fails to teach, disclose, or suggest the passenger-side air bag recited in claim 11. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is appropriate.

2. Rejections of Claims 8-10 and 12

Claims 8-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Onishi or U.S. Patent No. 5,129,675 (“Wang”). For the following reasons, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

As amended, claim 8 (*i.e.*, the claim from which claims 9, 10, and 12 depend) recites a passenger-side air bag that includes, among other possible things:

a front section including a pair of front panels forming an exterior surface,
wherein both front panels are positioned to face a torso of a passenger when the air bag deploys;
wherein one of the pair of front panels includes an integrally formed rearward extending section located inside the air bag and connecting the front section to a rear section; and
wherein a seam joining the pair of front panels is located away from the exterior surface so that the seam cannot contact the passenger when the air bag deploys.

As hereafter explained in detail, neither Onishi nor Wang teaches, discloses, or suggests such a passenger-side air bag.

As previously discussed with respect to the rejection of claim 11, Onishi fails to teach, disclose, or suggest a front section that includes a pair of front panels both of which are “positioned to face a torso of a passenger when the air bag deploys,” as recited in claim 8. For at least this reason, the rejection of claim 8 for obviousness in view of Onishi should be withdrawn.

Wang is also inapplicable to claim 8, as amended. Specifically, only the front wall 28 of Wang’s air bag is positioned to face a torso of a passenger. Accordingly, Wang, like Onishi, fails to teach, disclosure, or suggest a front section that includes a pair of front panels both of which are “positioned to face a torso of a passenger when the air bag deploys.”

For at least the aforementioned reasons, neither Wang nor Onishi discloses, teaches or suggests the invention recited in claim 8. Accordingly, neither Onishi nor Wang can be used to reject claim 8, or any claim dependent thereon, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Moreover, as

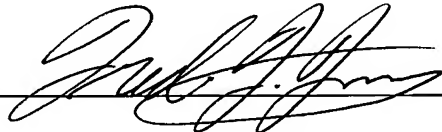
claims 9, 10, and 12 depend from claim 8, each of these dependent claims is also allowable over Onishi and Wang, without regard to the further patentable limitations recited in these dependent claims. Accordingly, a withdrawal of the rejections of claims 8-10 and 12 under § 103(a) is both warranted and earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 2-12 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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